

Howard Payne Conway, Jr.

Born: January 9, 1919
Hometown: Charlotte, NC
Class: 1943
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Engine Cadet
Date / Place of death: March 19, 1942 / 35-05N,
75-30W
Date / Place of burial: March 19, 1942 / Lost at Sea
– 35-05N, 75-30W
Age: 23



Howard P. Conway signed on aboard the *SS Liberator* as Engine Cadet on March 4, 1942 at New Orleans, LA. He had previously served aboard the *SS Howell Lykes*. Some time thereafter the ship loaded 11,000 tons of sulphur at Galveston and was bound for the Port of New York without escort. On the morning of March 19, 1942 the ship was three miles west of the Diamond Shoals buoy when it was sighted by *U-332*. The fact that the *Liberator* was not steering an evasive course made the ship an easy target for the submarine which fired one torpedo at the ship. At 1619 GCT the torpedo hit the *Liberator's* port side, destroying the engine room and killing five men, including Cadet-Midshipman Howard P. Conway, Jr. The explosion destroyed one life boat and blew the hatch off of Number Four Hold. However, during the 20 minutes or so the ship remained afloat the thirty-one surviving crew members launched the rest of the lifeboats and got away from the ship. They were picked up later the same day by the Navy tug *USS Umpqua (AT-25)*, and transported to Morehead City, North Carolina.

Although Cadet-Midshipmen Lewis and See had actually been lost in a sinking almost a month before this, the news of Cadet-Midshipman Conway's fate was the first confirmation of a fatality to reach the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps. Thus, he was mourned throughout the Cadet Corps as the first cadet to die in the conflict. The mess hall at Pass Christian was later named in his honor. He was posthumously awarded the Mariners Medal, Combat Bar with star, Atlantic War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

Howard P. Conway, Jr. was the only child of Howard Payne Conway, Sr. and Miriam Parker Conway. The elder Conway was the Southern District Manager for Grinnell Company and also for the General Fire Extinguisher Company, based in Charlotte, North Carolina. Father and son often took salt water fishing trips. Howard, Jr. attended Woodberry Forest Preparatory School in Virginia, where he was elected Senior Prefect in recognition of his personal integrity. After graduating from Woodberry Forest, Howard attended and graduated from Williams College.